

CRICHTON

Creighton

14804

CRICHTON

Caledon Township West

\* Lot 4. Con. 5. 23 June 1836. John Crichton 50 ac. Pat.

Sup. Caledon, Yeoman. C.R. allot. on Lot 6,  
con 4 E.

Sup. Caledon Pat. free.

## Rockside Pioneers. By Crichton.

I shall confine my story to a small locality in S.W. Caledon, County of Peel, locally known as Rockside and to a few families who by the associations and intimacies incident to pioneer life, and the subsequent intermingling by frequent intermarriages have become linked together like a tangled skein, and whose descendants are now spread over wide and ever widening circles.

My Father John Crichton, for he was one of the first group of immigrants into the locality.

John Crichton and John Jardine secured passage on board the emigrant ship The Young Norval. New staunch sailing vessels of less than a hundred tons register, and set sail from Gernock, April 1st 1820.

*Crichton* In this way the party after two weeks journeying reached Brockville, where my father and his companion parted from the others who were bound for Guelph and proceeded inland, some 15 miles to the location in the Twp of South Guelph, etc.

Feb. 3/34

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Taken from letter of Mrs. T.D. Richmond, Terra Cotta.

Pioneer Days.

Caledon.

A man by the name of George Walker kept the first school on the McLaughlan farm, this building was church, community, school, and council hall. John Crichton conducted the business for the community--he was a well educated man. He could draw up the papers for the farmers. For the transfers of land he could explain the law to them and he seems to have been a man of parts preaching, teaching, conducting the Sunday School.

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January 1825— A Township meeting was held at the house of Mathew Crook, Lot 14, Con. 4, Caledon West, .... John Crichton was appointed collector of taxes.

Crichton

The first marriage celebrated in the Rockside settlement was in the Autumn of 1822 when John Crichton was married to Margaret Kirkwood, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Kirkwood already referred to. Like most other achievements in the forest wilderness, this was not accomplished without serious difficulties, and though it savored nothing of romance, it might well be said to have been romantic. As we have already seen, no minister but an Anglican could have performed the ceremony, especially seeing that as yet neither of the parties were members of any Presbyterian congregation. The nearest minister then, even had they been willing to avail themselves of his services, was Rev. John Strachan, Rector of York. There was a magistrate, Squire Scott, living near to where Brampton now stands, but the bridegroom preferred to have the service performed by his friend and townsman Mr. Matthew Crooks of Ancaster, a service which Mr. Crooks was cordially willing to render. Having made the journey in the settlement in the backwoods, Mr. Crooks discovered that, while his jurisdiction was confined to Gore District, the bride's home was across the boundary line in Home District, but no obstacle can for long obstruct the course of true love and this one was readily obviated by the bridal party just crossing over the way in the wood, and having selected a goodly maple tree, the lovers ~~at~~ took their stand beneath its spreading branches and ~~were~~ their plighted their troth, and their bands were sealed beneath the luxuriant magnificence of Canada's National Emblem.

On 6 February, 1837, Robert Brown's eldest daughter Jean became the second wife of John Crichton of Rockside, Caledon...

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My father went to York where he sought out a Paisley man of his acquaintance named Archd. McNaughton who had emigrated a few years before, and was now plying his trade as a copper in York. When at length he visited the Crown Lands Office, he enquired if one John McDonald and others had been there, and whether they had located their homesteads.

The map of Caledon was produced and their locations pointed out. My father selected North  $\frac{1}{2}$  of lot 4, on the 5th con. W. I have by me the oath of allegiance made on that occasion and bears the date of 25th July 1820. No sooner had my father chosen N $\frac{1}{2}$  lot 4, than a man standing by said "I'll take the south  $\frac{1}{2}$  thus they were each deprived from securing the reserve fifty acres otherwise available. The man was Hugh McLaren who, with his youngest son John who succeeded him, lived and died on the homestead valued and respected neighbors and citizens. ... finally settled on his location and became one of the Rockside Pioneers. ...

*Creighton*

It was in the summer of 1844 that I (R. Crichton) got my first lessons in going to School. The old log building close to the White church was still the Schoolhouse. A path leading to Schurch and School passed through our sugar bush and through that of Widow McLean and down her lane, through her barnyard, and on past her house to the road near to the school. Her barnyard was presided over by a large domineering ~~the~~ turkey gobbler, very large he seemed to me. I always had for company Janet McDougal, who lived on the next farm and was a few years older than I, and with Janet walking between old Tom and myself, I was usually safe, but my mother sometimes adorned me with a red scarf a badge Tom regarded as peculiarly his own, and which he sometimes resented by alighting on my back to punish me for my temerity. Now I have always had a wholesome dread for bears, and wolves and rattlesnakes and such, and have yet under certain conditions, but that gobbler was the worst <sup>that</sup> terror ever overtook me. One day in the early Fall Janet was not going to School and I pleaded for leave to stay at home too, but no, my lunch was prepared, and my bag and book given me, and I was dispatched to school. Now, one or two things had to be done, and it was mine to decide. I had either to take chances with old Tom, or I must play truant, which latter was my choice.. So, going to the hillside in the woods overlooking the school, I set about beguiling the weary hours. When School dismissed at noon I ate my lunch, and when it dismissed at 4 P.M. I started for home. Thus far all went well; but during the afternoon two women passed along the path through the wood. Of course I hid, but who could hide from two inquisitive women with all their eyes open; so, in passing our house they reported having seen a little ~~the~~ fairy in the woods. What else would one expect of

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women? On at length reaching home I was questioned about the school and my lesson, and of course I told all about them; but then O then! a sharp twig from a nearby wild plum tree appeared on the scene, and Old Tom was for the time forgotten and left entirely in the shade. Now I may as well confess that I was a coward, a truant and a liar and deserved all I got, and I can assure you that I never played truant again; But I have always thought there should be some way of dealing with parents who would compel a five-year-old boy, all alone, to encounter a belligerent turkey gobbler.

16 March 1921.

R. Crichton

War 1812

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Military

My Father, although in sympathy with the measures contended for, believing they could eventually be secured by constitutional means, refused to concur in the rebellion. Accordingly, when the call was made for the Militia to rally for the defence of Toronto, he made his will, melted a quantity of lead, and moulded a pouchful of bullets, slung his powder horn under his arm and shouldering his old flintlock, set out for the place of rendezvous at Campbell's Cross. They were instructed to carry such weapons as they had as means of defence by the way, but that they would be supplied with arms on reaching Toronto. Arriving at the rallying point, however, news awaited them that the rebels had been defeated in a scrimmage at Montgomery's Tavern on Young St. and Toronto was now safe, and so they were disbanded and sent home.

John Creighton (Creighton)

Baldon W. not 4 on 5.

(Patent, - since 1836.